

Is Apple Evil?

Today's iPad introduction has to be about the most depressing Apple product launch I've ever watched. As has been [noted](#), Jobs' Reality Distortion Field only works when he believes in what he's selling and he didn't seem to really believe in this. The audience must have further added to the disappointment, expecting a revolutionary product and only getting an oversized iPhone (iPod touch, actually).

That's not to say the iPad won't sell, or that I don't want one. The scariest thing is that I think it probably will. It's clear that Apple plans for the iPhone OS to be the future of its product line. And that's scary because the iPhone OS is designed for Apple's total control.

A lot of people have argued that requiring Apple to approve every application for the iPhone OS is some kind of "mistake", something they'll remedy as soon as they realize how bad things have gotten. But recent events — Phil Schiller's personal interventions, comments on their call to analysts, etc. — have made it clear it's not a mistake at all. It's their plan.

The iPad is their attempt to extend this total control to what's traditionally been thought of as the computer space. This is just the first step, but it's not hard to imagine Apple doing their best to phase out the Macintosh in the next decade, just as they phased out OS 9. In their ideal world, all computing will be done on the iPhone OS.

And the iPhone OS will only run software that they specifically approve. No Flash or other alternate runtimes, no one-off apps or open source customizations. Just total control by Apple. It's a frightening future.

I don't know why they're doing it. It's hard to see how it makes them more money. (Curating all those apps must be expensive, not to mention the lost sales from the unapproved ones.) I can only presume it's a result of Jobs' megalomaniacal need for control — not only does the hardware have to be flawless, the software must be too. And the only way to ensure that is to have Apple approve every inch of it.

I love Apple products. I'm a huge Apple fan. I'd buy an iPad right now if I could. But, for the first time, I've got a real sinking feeling in my stomach.

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